



Glastir Woodland
Creation Scheme,
Blaenafon Farm,
Tonmawr

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Last year, Blaenafon Farm was sold to a new owner, who has plans to plant a large part of it with a new woodland, like the ones above and below.



The woodland will consist of a mixture of productive conifers including spruces and fir on the hill ground, and native broadleaved trees on the lower ground and where the planting is visible from Tonmawr village. The work is being carried out as part of a Welsh Government Glastir Woodland Creation scheme and will comply with all the Glastir and UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) best practice guidelines.

The project has passed an Environmental Impact Assessment opinion from the regulatory authority, and statutory consultees have also had input into the scheme. Now it's the turn of local people to have the opportunity to comment on it.

Usually, consultation with neighbouring residents would be via an open meeting in the village hall. Sadly, Covid has meant that face-to-face events can no longer take place. We are therefore trying an on-line survey to ascertain your thoughts on the new woodland above the village. Covid restrictions permitting, we would like to invite local children to come and join us in planting some of the trees close to the village as part of a community planting event later in the year.

The objective for the areas planted with conifer is the production of sustainable high quality timber to supply local markets. The objective for the broadleaved areas is to plant locally native trees where they will thrive, keep the woodland diverse, be a haven for wildlife, and to store carbon. It's not all going to be trees - non-woodland habitats will be an important part of the design. There will be areas kept as open ground around the streams, watercourses, old field boundaries and on some of the best fields for livestock grazing. There will also be open ground around houses to preserve views and sunlight. There are areas of existing woodland and old field boundary trees on the farm. These areas will be kept and won't be disturbed. They are important habitats in their own right and will also spread seed into the planting area to increase the component of genetically local trees. The diversity of woodland will make it as resilient as possible against future pests, diseases and the effects of climate change.

The existing farm track needs some upgrading to make it usable during the tree planting and maintenance work. Part of this route is also a public footpath, and the improvements will make the footpath better and less muddy to use in the winter months. The track will be capped with stone dug from the site - this avoids quarry lorries coming through the village carrying stone. The surfacing will include trackside drainage to stop water running down the track, through the farmyard and towards houses. There are also plans for 2 new spurs of basic formation 'farm-type' tracks along the contour to allow access away from the public road to the north and south ends of the site.

Before the trees are planted, there will be some ground preparation needed, similar to the photos above. There will be a small ribbon ploughed or mounded, and the trees will be planted on the top of the mound. This keeps them away from weeds and warms the soil up to help them grow away better.

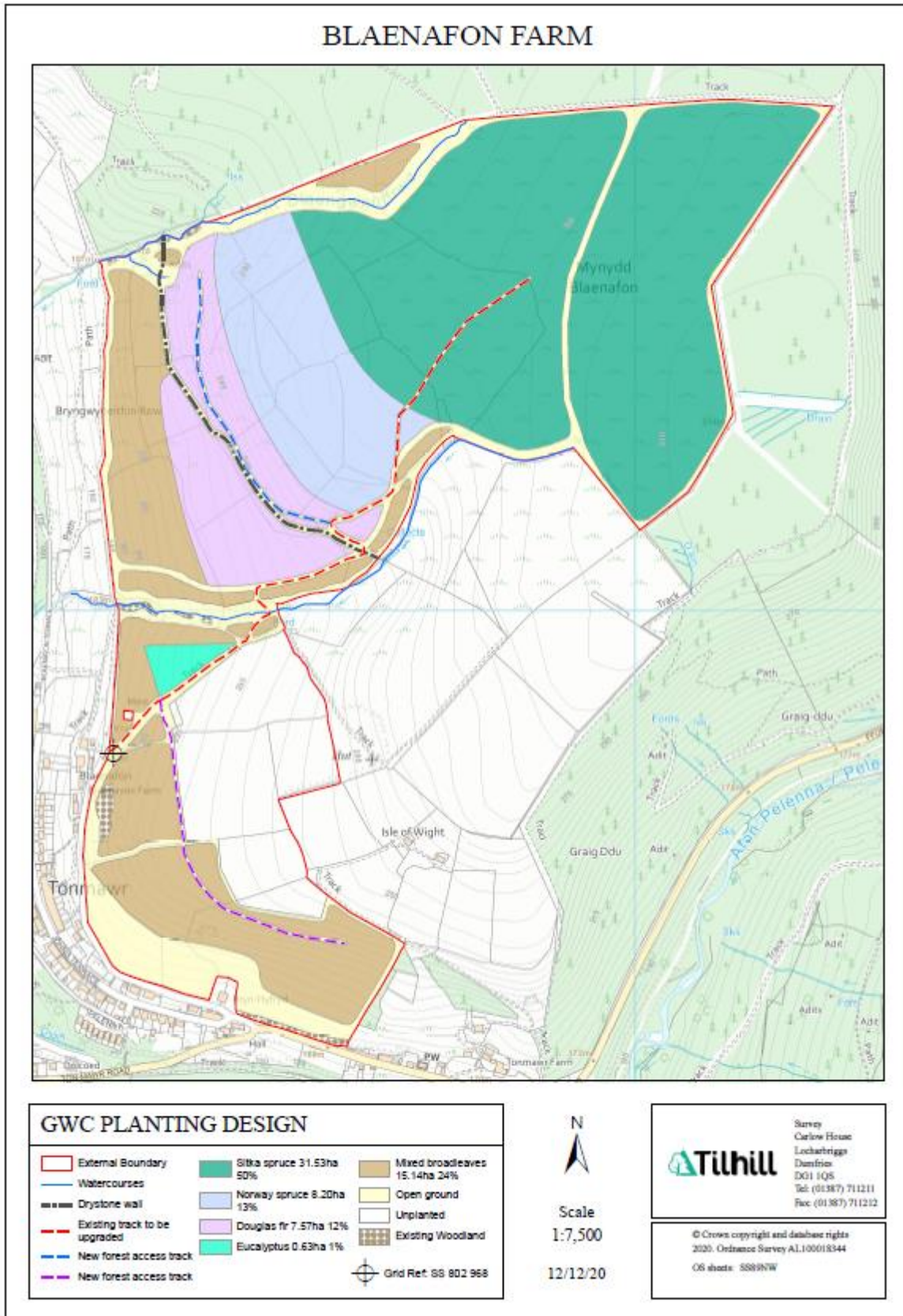
The broadleaves will be planted with 'rabbit guards' around them to prevent them from being nibbled.

Trees are incredible natural carbon capture and storage machines. The new woodland will be a carbon sink, absorbing atmospheric CO2 and locking it up. The entire woodland ecosystem plays a role in this, including the living wood, roots, leaves, deadwood, surrounding soils and vegetation. The tree canopy will also play a part in slowing rainwater, which will help to even out peak flows and reduce flooding risk downstream.

A plan of the proposed planting is overleaf:

Continued...

Map of the proposed new woodland design



The following YouTube video produced by the forestry industry body Confor and the Woodland Trust website are useful sources of information about the benefits that trees can bring us if you would like to know more.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_dhXbLj9mE&feature=youtu.be

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/how-trees-fight-climate-change/>

A link to our survey where you can make your own comments can be found here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DT2X89Q>

Thank you for taking the time to read about our plans, we really do value your feedback.

Sonia Winder

Forest Manager